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**Letter dated 28 August 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing to express my deep concerns about the biased report on the situation in the Middle East delivered on 20 August 2013 by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs to the Security Council.

One would think that a report on the situation in the Middle East would focus on the humanitarian crisis that has besieged Syria for the past two and a half years. Over 100,000 men, women, and children have been slaughtered and millions have fled their homes. At the time of the Assistant Secretary-General's August report, the regime stood accused of using chemical weapons on its citizens. Despite all this, just a few paragraphs of the report were devoted to the chaos in Syria.

Turmoil and unrest are rampant from Tehran to Tunis, but the vast majority of the Middle East report centred on Israel and the Palestinians. Rather than hearing about the facts on the ground, the Security Council heard a report that leaves a lot to be desired. Specifically:

- In his report, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs stated that, "The calm in Gaza has been tentative, with six projectiles shot at Israel". One needs the eloquence of Shakespeare to describe a barrage of rockets and mortar shells intended to kill innocent civilians as "projectiles". The choice of language projects more about the author than the situation in Israel's south.

- The section on Gaza also noted that, "... the long-standing restrictions on the free movement of people and goods via Israel ... [has resulted] in shortages in key medical supplies". In truth, Israel does not place restrictions on medical supplies entering Gaza. Furthermore, since 23 July 2013, 23 tons of medical equipment entered Gaza via Kerem Shalom crossing. This is in addition to 418 tons of goods that passed from Israel into Gaza during the same period. It would seem that the only shortage to speak of is the shortage of accurate information in the monthly reports.

- The report described that "[there] appears to be a significant increase in demolitions in East Jerusalem during the reporting period". It would appear that this report has been constructed on half-truths, using omissions to denounce demolitions. The report curiously neglects to note that following a judicial review, the buildings in question were found to be illegally constructed.

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- With regard to Lebanon, the report stated, "Determination is pending as to whether any other violation, such as the presence of unauthorized weapons or armed personnel, was involved". While the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs had no misgivings about aiming allegations directly at Israel Defense Forces (IDF) activities, he was unwilling to explicitly condemn the terrorist group Hizbullah for intentionally planting explosive devices. He also conveniently neglected to report that Hizbullah is operating within civilian populations and directing attacks against civilian populations. Hizbullah is committing a double war crime, making it doubly disturbing that it was absent from the report.

- With regard to Syria, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs wrote that, "Israel Defense Forces fired at least two guided missiles from the Alpha side across the ceasefire line, in response to earlier fire from the Bravo side that crossed the ceasefire line". I cannot say bravo to the Assistant Secretary-General for not being more explicit about events on the Bravo side. As mortar shells fell inside Israel, the IDF issued repeated warnings. After the third mortar fell, the IDF fired a warning shot.

- Reading the Assistant Secretary-General's report, one would need a strong pair of binoculars to zoom in on significant developments in the region. While the Assistant Secretary-General chose to report that three Palestinians had attempted to swim towards Israel, many far more important events were omitted. For example, Israel's painful decision to release convicted murderers to advance peace negotiations received only a passing mention. Additionally, while the report noted concerns with the well-being of Palestinian prisoners, it failed to mention that these are convicted murderers who are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Israeli men, women and children.

Finally, during the reporting period, there were a number of attacks aimed at Israelis that were not reported to the Council. In the West Bank, attacks by Palestinians injured 13 IDF soldiers and 5 Israeli citizens.

The 20 August 2013 report painted a blatantly distorted picture of the reality in our region. I urge the Council to insist that future reports clarify the situation in the Middle East.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative